

## [Grandpa's Life]

26123

EXTRACT

From

A True Story of Some Eventful Years in

Granpa's Life

By

Henry E. Perrine

Land was granted by Congress in 1838 to Dr. Henry Perrine (a native of New Brunswick, N.J., and later, in 1827, Consul at Campeche, Yucatan) for a township, with a view of encouragement in his enterprise; the introduction of useful tropical plants and seeds into the Territory of Florida, including the tea plant. His choice had been Cape Florida, but owing to the Seminole War he and his family (his wife, two daughters and a son of thirteen years) were established at Indian Key, a supposed place of safety.

Indian Key was a small Island about twenty miles south of Caps Sable and four or five miles inside from the so-called Florida Reef.

### THE ISLAND

The island comprised only twelve acres. Captain Houseman man was the proprietor of the various cottages; shops, stores; hotel and warehouses, while Mr. Charles Howe was the

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Post Master and Deputy Inspector of customs. Three large wharfs stretched out from the northeastern side of the island.

The foundation of the Perrine house was built in the water, thus the cellar was useful, during high tide, as a bathing pool into which the family descended through a trap door, with steps leading down.

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### WATERY FOUNDATION

Between the house and the wharf in front there was a connecting dark passageway so built as to appear from without as being built of solid masonry. In the early days of the Seminole war a small boat had been kept in this place of concealment, providing means of escape in the event of a night attack from the Indians.

During the Seminole war the government established a station at Tea Table Key (a diminutive Island, one and one-half mile away toward the northeast and near the lower end of another island, Upper Matacumbe) for invalid soldiers. This

### FANCIED SECURITY

fact gave to the inhabitants of Indian Key a false sense of protection, and despite the intelligence received at one time from Colonel Harney, who landed at Indian Key from a turtle schooner, that he had just escaped from the terrible massacre of his soldiers by the Indians at Caloosahatchie, on the river of that name on the west coast of Florida, they still felt security as no one believed that the savages would dare to venture twenty miles from the mainland to attack a settlement apparently under the protection of U.S. soldiers.

Small palmetto piles had been driven down into the marl all around the "pool" under the houses which were spiked to the upper timbers, thus obstructing all passages

## TURTLE CRAWL

from the "pool" to the open sea, but leaving sufficient space for the ingress and egress of the tide. This space was called a turtle crawl in which the green, or loggerhead turtle, when captured, would be kept for further disposal.

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The house was three-storied, with a cupola and having an upper and lower piazza across the front. Entrance to the cupola was made through a trap door. There was no

## TYPE OF HOUSE

lath nor plaster, the rooms being all ceiled and lined with yellow pine.

Henry, Dr. Perrine's son, and also author of this book, early learned to row and skull a boat, which skill shortly was to be of inestimable value to many individuals.

\* \* \* \* \*

Henry, in company with Mr. Howe, in his boat which was handled by negro slaves, takes an excursion to an Island about seven miles away, a great nesting place for sea fowl. Approaching their destination they beheld throngs of cormorants and pelicans, also cranes, which rose filling the air with their

## SEA FOWL

discordant cries. The negroes captured a number of young cormorants (which had not learned to fly) while Henry carried home a crane, which was easily tamed and became an interesting pet.

Quite a number of men were engaged in the capture of green turtles, etc., for the northern markets. This was their principal source of livelihood. In latter years the procuring of

## LUCRATIVE INDUSTRY

sponges superseded the turtle industry, as being more profitable. "When the surface of the water is rough the spongers are able to examine the bottom as their boat glides slowly along, by using a small keg or box, in the bottom of which a pane of glass is securely fixed. By pressing this into the water below the ripples, they can see bottom almost 3 as well as on a calm day." (a glass-bottom boat)!

The collecting of rain water in cisterns built above ground, and in casks was their only means of obtaining water to drink, or for laundry purposes. During the dry season they frequently had to procure water from the neighboring island, Lower Matacumbe, where they filled barrels from a sink hole, about thirty yards back from the beach. The water had to be strained previous to drinking to rid it of embryo mosquitoes.

For the purpose of developing a nursery for useful tropical plants, Mr. Howe had his slaves prepare the soil near a sink hole, or natural well of fresh water, on Lower Matacumbe. The labor was peculiarly difficult inasmuch as the ground was permeated and interlaced in all directions with the roots of the gumbo limbo tress and the various vines which had to be out on every hand with the grub hoe. "The gumbo limbo tree has wonderful vitality; the posts cut from it will take root and throw out branches, so that for fencing purposes there is no danger of decay. It is said that a log of this tree, laying upon the ground, will throw out roots into the ground and branches will grow from above."

In the channel, near Tea Table Key, Henry sees a slave catch a murray (accent on last syllable). This is a salt water eel. Its bite is, like the rattlesnake's poisonous. Its body is of mottled green, and hideous. Whenever one is caught the fishing is

## THE MURRAY

spoiled in that locality for the time being. Negroes consider this eel edible.

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Henry beholds a fish-hawk suddenly drop into the water, and as he rose into the air carrying a large fish in his claws, a 5 large bald eagle came flying swiftly' from above. The hawk gave

### A WINGED BATTLE

an angry scream, dropped the fish and sped away, while the eagle with nearly lightning speed swooped down and carried off his prey.

Peculiar to this region is the water spout, which Henry sees during a rain storm, high up in the heavens; beginning with a

### WATER SPOUT

cloud from which descended to the ocean a long, sinuous body like a snake, twisted and bent by the wind as it sped along the surface of the water. After traveling about a mile it struck Matacumbe when most of the body suddenly disappeared, although the cloud preserved its cone-like appearance for a mile longer. A perfect water spout!

On a water trip in search of oysters, Henry and party anchored at Sand Key, a then nearly barren island about a mile from Cape Sable. He describes the scene as one of rare beauty and

### UNUSUAL SCENE

interest, where, in the water, on land and in flight, were multitudes of birds: pelicans, cranes, flamingoes, gulls, frigate birds, cormorants and killdeers.

Dr. Perrine plants a few seeds here, at Sand Key; among others, date seeds and "it is possible that some of the palm trees later grown there were the offspring of his thoughtfulness."

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After passing westward along the capes they shaped their course northwardly, casting anchor off the mouth of a small stream, lined with mangrove trees. The bottom of the bay seemed covered with oysters and the tide being at half [ebb?], an oyster bank stood uncovered. They landed and enjoyed a feast.

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In the small hours of August 7th, 1840, the family were awakened by the Indian warwhoop, the discharge of guns and the falling of window glass. Mrs. Perrine and the three

### THE MASSACRE

children in their night garments, hastily went through the trap door, down into the water beneath their house, secreting themselves in the turtle crawl, where the water was "cold and even with their necks." Dr. Perrine would not follow them thinking that by his remaining behind, in the house, he could pacify the savages by speaking to them in Spanish (as their grievance seemed to be only against Americans) and telling them that he was a physician. This he did, from the upper piazza, but of no avail. Their yelling ceased temporarily however, and they went away. In the meantime Dr. Perrine drew a chest of seed across the trap door concealing his family in the cellar from the savage eyes, and ascended into the cupola, only to be found, later, by the bloodthirsty Indians, who forced their way to him and finished their work with horrible howls of satisfaction, heard by the trembling, fearful, grieving family below.

Very soon afterward the smoke and terrible heat in the watery cellar, acquainted the refugees of their burning home, which would cave in upon them. They kept their faces to the water, plastered their heads with marl and threw the water over them constantly to keep the air in motion, and to cool it, in order that they might breathe, at the same time throwing marl upon the burning planks above their heads.

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Henry decided that he would rather be killed by the 7 Indians than to be burned to death, following his decision with his marvelous escape by forcing aside a palmetto post, which made an opening only large enough for him to barely go through. With a sorrowful glance backward toward his mother and sisters, he passed through the turtle crawl out into the open space. As though inspired, Mrs. Perrine then delved into the marl with her fingers finally drawing out a few posts from the bottoms which enabled all to pass from their prison into the water near the wharf. Emerging from the hole at the end of the wharf they discovered a launch, its bow resting on the shore. The boat belonged to six Indians who were (at that moment) in a store near by preparing to bring their loot to this launch.

Henry, his mother and sisters were quick to enter the boats and although only thirteen, skillfully handled the craft, with his sister's aid, until they were out of rifle-shot distance. From this boat they were taken to the schooner, Medium, where they found Mr. Howe and his family, also Captain Houseman. Intelligence of the massacre was sent to Cape Florida, about seventy miles up the coast, by a small boat, and shortly there came to assist them, the U. S. S., Flirt, commanded by Lieut. McLaughlin. From the Flirt they boarded the government steamer, Santee which took them to St. Augustine, where they were supplied with adequate necessities; the citizens calling upon them and offering generous assistance.

From St. Augustine, the Perrine family (trusting 8 that by some happy miracle Dr. Perrine was still alive) secured, through the kindness of Dr. Edward Worrell, U. S. A., free passage on the water and on the railroad to Auburn, N. Y., from which place they rode for "half-fare" in a carriage to Palmyra, New York, their former home.

Many of the inhabitants of Indian Key, like the Perrines, effected marvelous escape from the Indians, but the island was reduced to dust. Many were brutally slain. Among those who escaped were "Mr. Henry Goodyear, of the Goodyear Rubber Company."

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The interior of the lighthouse at Cape Florida was burned while the keeper was upon the summit of the highwall. He was rescued by flying a kite and dropping the line where he could reach it, by which means he was able to draw up a cord sufficiently strong to bear his weight. By fastening it at the top he let himself down, hand over hand, until he reached the ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

While in New York Henry studies law and is admitted to the Bar. He later concludes he should have chosen the study of medicine, instead, becomes discouraged, and after trying variout various odd jobs and positions is induced by uncle and cousins to join the procession of 1849 to California.

He sails in the Susan G. Owens, around Cape Horn. Full complement of the ship was 169 passengers; passage fare in the cabin was \$250 each. Before entering the tropics they saw

### TRIP TO THE WEST

large schools of porpoises, which were different from the “unwieldy monsters” seen near the Florida Keys.

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These were only four or five feet long, leaping their entire length out of the water. There were also visible Portugese Men-of-War, beautiful red, purple and blue curiosities of the sea. They have “upon their backs a sort of sail by means of which they are wafted over the waves. As the rays of light strike them they are radiant at times, with rosy hues changing from pink and violet to the deepest blue. (Here the author compares the scene to that of Indian Key). June 1st - “A number of passengers rowed over to the barque, Simlar, bound for London, to send letters home.



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EXCERPTS FROM DIARY SEA June 2nd - "Running along now about four knots an hour. Spoke with Norwegian barque, Antelope, coming from California, bound for Gottenburg. Monotony of the voyage again broken by a word with the French barque, Sophie Cesar; from the Mozambique, bound for the Harve-de-Grace. During a heavy shower caught several casks of "delicious" drinking water." June 3rd - "A shark, four and a half feet long, was caught during the night and served for breakfast." Henry compares the vessel and the sea to that mentioned in "The Ancient Mariner." . . . It is the Sabbath and Henry retires to the quarter deck during the religious services, preferring solitude and his thoughts to a "Service read by a grew-haired sinner who deals out liquor during the week to the passengers, and who "took a horn before service." June 13th - "Saw many fish called Albicares, around the bow. They were in pursuit of the flying fish which were constantly 10 starting by thousands from the water, and skimming over the surface like swallows." June 14th - "Crossed the Equator. A species of shark called the dog-fish was caught today." June 16th - "We will pass the dreaded Cape St. Roque today. We now feel the full force of the southeast trade winds and hope to reach Rio by a week from tomorrow." June 24th - "Instead of reaching Rio we are now becalmed about 30 miles from Cape Frio, whose lighthouse is visible. Saw a bird called the marline spike. It resembles the frigate bird of Florida." June 25th - "I am really gazing upon the coast of South America, and right before me is Brazil. As we near the entrance to the harbor we behold a scene of grandeur and beauty. On the left is a peak about 900 feet high, called the Sugar Loaf. One can imagine a loaf of sugar which had had its base partially melted." June 25th - "We enter this wondrously beautiful harbor and drop anchor. The city of Rio Janeiro is about three miles farther in. The passengers hired a boat to take them into the city. Boats are moving in every direction, rowed by negro slaves. The roofs of all the buildings are tiled, resembling long rows of flower-pots out in half. Lengthwise, and laid side-by-side and fitted into each other in reverse order. In the markets are varieties of fruits, vegetables, fish, poultry, birds and monkeys."

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"Crowds of half-naked negro women are washing clothes 11 at the open square. Across the bay in a small steamer, the San Domingo. I saw men wearing Iron collars and chained to each other (a chain gang). Had to submit to the imposition of 20 percent reduction on both gold and silver coin, in exchange for bulky copper "dumps and half dumps."

The emperor complimented their behavior while they were in the city. "Mr. Wise, of Virginia, is the consul at Brazil. NOTE: Probably Henry A. Wise, afterwards Governor of Virginia when John Brown was hanged." \* \* \* The streets were very narrow; the Portugese were distinguished from the Negroes only by their straight hair. The majority of the soldiers were Negroes. In the churches there the candles burned in solid silver candlesticks. The music was noteworthy. Her remarks upon the brass bands. "The loveliness of the feather flowers made here are indescribable." There was marvelous diamond jewelry in the jewelry shops.

Henry mentions the sloop-of-war, Falmouth, from Boston, bound for California. National salute of thirteen guns is answered by the Brandywine. Sight of the American flag stirs his emotions. He visits a picturesque plantation, located between two mountain cliffs, where "grew in boundless profusion tropical fruits and flowers." The Fourth of July was celebrated in Rio Janeiro. An extemporized military company paraded under command of Lieut. Wheeler, "an officer lately returned from Mexico." National airs were sung and the Declaration of Independence was read; guns were fired 12 and an impromptu oration was delivered by a Mr. Moreland, of Cincinnati. July 6th - "We are one-third the distance from Rio to the Horn. There is a great change in the weather as we go farther South. It is nearly mid-winter here. An overcoat feels comfortable. Cape pigeons and Cape hens are flying around the ship, indicating severe weather at the Cape, as the captain says they seldom ever come so far north." August 7th - "South Pacific Ocean off the Patagonian Coast: The waves towered far above the bulwarks. before passing Cape Horn we were followed by a school of whales, several of which came within two hundred yards of the

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ship. For a number of days the sun rose at about 8:30 and set correspondingly early. Hours of darkness and damp, chilly weather; dead of winter here, and a snow storm."

Henry is disappointed in the Southern Cross as the four stars, of which the constellation is composed, "are not, says he, "at all suggestive of a cross, nor do they equal in brilliancy many of those seen in northern skies". He was impressed with the so-called [Magellan?] clouds seen in the Southern heavens on any clear and star-lit night. "Upon the Milky Way are some apparently black clouds. The phenomenon is caused by a total absence of stars or nebulae in those vast depths, and the resulting darkness is made more apparent by the light from the innumerable stars surrounding the spaces thus left vacant." Sept. 3rd - The Chilian Coast is not, Henry thinks, comparable to the Brazilian Coast, the harbor is "a miserable one.

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The city lies in scattered directions. It is spring weather; peach tress are in bloom and children sell flowers on the streets." The absence of the slave population is noticeable as compared to Rio. The streets are wider, cleaner and more beautiful. The men, both of mixed and pure blood, have straight features and are handsome. October 12th - "Today we arrived at the San Francisco Harbor. The gun squad fired a national salute of thirteen guns, just outside the entrance." Large flocks of pelicans and cormorants hovering, aroused in Henry memories of Florida. "The passengers eagerly scanned the scenes before them as we slowly sailed through the Golden Gate."

Few of the buildings in San Francisco had architectural beauty, and the majority of them were only tents. Henry sees a few adobe buildings with tile roofs, "relics of Mexican

### SAN FRANCISCO

occupation." In every direction wooden buildings were in progress of erection. There were signs of business activity everywhere. The streets were unpaved and muddy.

## Library of Congress

Carpenters were receiving \$12 a day; they struck, asking for \$16, but were given \$14, with promise of an increase.

### PRICES IB 1849

Skilled mechanics received from \$12 to \$20 per day. Ordinary laborers earned \$1 an hour. Lumber was \$500 per thousand. From eight to fifteen percent a month was paid in advance for the use of money with real security. Board was \$30 a week or \$8 per day, etc., etc.

Quoted from "Annals of San Francisco", compiled and 14 edited by Frank Soule, and others:

"Nearly 40,000 immigrants landed in San Francisco in 1849. Three or four thousand deserted from the many hundred ships lying in the bay. About thirty thousand came across the plains. There were few women and children at the close of that year. No such thing as a home could be found; scarcely even a proper house could be seen. Only the great gambling saloons, the hotels, restaurants and a few public buildings and stores, had any pretensions to size, comfort or elegance. Horses, mules and oxen forced a way through, across and over every obstruction in the streets and men waded, and toiled after them. Gambling was carried on in the most public manner in the hundreds of saloons which were thronged day and night."

With companions from Trenton, N. J., Henry takes passage on a schooner for Sacramento, to locate somewhere in the mountains, near the place where gold had first been discovered, for the purpose of finding his share. After passing

### SACRAMENTO

the straggling settlement of Benicia they encountered darkness and a dense fog, driven on by a chilling wind which enveloped them, dampening their spirits as well as their clothes.

## Library of Congress

Henry finds Sacramento, in many respects, like San Francisco, except “there were no hills to surmount.” The town was situated in the midst of a live oak grove, handsomely laid out with wide streets running at right angles with one another. With other gold seekers, they pitched their tents there, in the grove, for the night, and the following day started 15 for Culloma, the place where gold was first discovered at Sutter's Mill. The country was covered with “oak openings - succession of beautiful oak groves; destitute of underbrush and although there were no fences, there was such an appearance of regularity (as in orchards) that at each turn in the road they expected to see a farm house. “Cooper describes such scenery in ‘The Bee Hunters’.”

Henry meets an acquaintance from Buffalo, on horseback, roughly garbed, who tells him that he has dug \$3,000 worth of the “golden dust” and is returning home.

The party passes several Digger Indians, “a miserably degraded race whose food, according to report, consists of acorns, worms, and insects. These Indians had just thrown

### INDIANS

one of their old men into the fire, merely because they were weary of taking care of him.

At Culloma was a deeply cut road and a settlement containing forty or fifty buildings. The situation was upon the South Fork of the American River. Woods rose on every

### CULLOMA

hand. The river was spanned by a tall bridge, one hundred or two hundred yards above the famed Sutters's Mill. “It was where that Marshall discovered the yellow particles, which were to be the means of revolutionizing the trade and commerce of the world.”

While walking along the edge of a shallow stream Henry mistook the yellow, glittering scales of mica on the bottom for gold, but learned that gold seeks a lower level and 16

## Library of Congress

“modestly hides its face deep in the bosom of the earth.” Members of the party built a log hut, similar to the others there, and to this hut they walked seven miles up the mountain.

About a quarter of a mile from the cabin was an Indian village, - “a collection of rude wigwams made of bark. The men were nearly all away but the squaws were frequently seen as they wandered around with large conical baskets upon their backs. A few of the men and women were wearing ‘mourning’, a material composed of tar and charcoal, smeared upon the middle of their noses, on each cheek, and upon their foreheads. Their beauty is not enhanced by the frescoing.”

Henry is not successful as a gold digger, and decides to go to his uncle's ranch below San Jose, where he is developing a cinnabar mine. While there he was placed in charge of a mule-team “engaged in hauling the ore from mine to

### CIMMABAR MINE

Embarcadero, eight or nine miles.” His uncle's house was situated four miles south of San Jose (the Capitol) near the San Juan Bautista hills, in which the cinnabar leads had been found. A hundred yards west of the house was the small range of hills, and from their tops, looking still towards the west, across another beautiful valley, was the “lofty coast of range mountains, in which was the celebrated New Almaden and Guada lupe cinnabar, or quicksilver mines, said to be the most valuable in the world. The plains were luxuriant with grass and carpeted with flowers. The mustard plant, growing near the Townsend ranch, reached nearly the 17 height of the branches in which the ‘fowls of the air’ could easily have rested.” A red, rich ore was obtained but not a twentieth part sufficient to pay the expenses, as over \$10,000 had been invested in the enterprise.

Mr. Townsend's (Henry's uncle) enterprise is a failure, apparently. In later years Henry reads in a California paper “An account of certain holes that had been discovered in those very hills, supposed to have been worked by Mexicans many years previous, and parties who followed up the traces of cinnabar found therein had already gotten out several

## Library of Congress

hundred tons of the valuable ore from the same holes which our men had opened up in 1850.”

Henry returns to the gold mine. He agreed to work his friend's share in the Tuolumne River, in exchange for two-thirds of the amount he might receive. (He emerged through worse than pioneer difficulties) to find that the company had obtained between \$34,000 and \$35,000 worth of fine scale gold, of which his share was only one 108th. He returns to San Francisco to find “many brick buildings had been erected and the city had begun to extend far into the bay. On the Plaza was a row of saloons, such as no city in the United States could produce or equal in splendor. At many of the gambling tables were female gamblers.

Henry expresses gratitude for his early training which imbues him with wise judgment, protecting him from the “gambling places, etc., attractively presented.”

Mail steamers arrived twice a month; postage per letter was forty cents.

On the evening of May 23rd, 1851, a fire started, presumably 18 in a paint shop. Fed by a fiercely blowing wind, within a few hours the whole business section was an entire mass of flames and in a brief period the “whole region glowed, crackled

### SAN FRANCISCO FIRE

and blazed, one immense fiery field. The reflection from the sky of this conflagration was said to have been visible at Monterey, nearly one hundred miles away. On all sides in the doomed city was heard the fierce roar as of many storms that drowned the shouts of men and the shrieks of women. The damage was moderately estimated at \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000. Seven weeks afterward a second fire occurred, which loss was estimated at \$3,000,000. “The veriest haunts of crime and lurking places of wicked, black-hearted villains were visited by this scourge.”

## Library of Congress

Henry, with a partner, in established in the grocery business. He selects Stockton, California for this work as Stockton was a shipping point for the Southern mines and a team and packtrain center. He begins to enjoy a measure of success, when he decides to return to the East on a visit.

Leaving San Francisco on the side-wheel steamer, Golden Gate, he sails via Panama. "Panama" he writes: "is walled in, abounding in churches and cathedrals, with extensive ruins in the heart of the city."

Henry rides a mule across the Isthmus, passing a Treasure Train, guarded by dirty, barefoot soldiers, wearing soiled Panama hats and scant, dirty clothing. He sees many boxes of "gold

### MULE-BACK RIDE ACROSS THE ISTHMUS

dust" protested only by two, "half-naked apologies for soldiers." He meets the celebrated Texas Ranger, Col.

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Jack Hayes, on a mule holding a child in his arms. He is robbed of his trunk during the night, while a guest in the "so-called American hotel, at Cruces, on the Chagres river" but discovers it "after a thorough search in the bushes, etc.," under the house, or "hotel", hidden there by the landlord, who probably thought it contained lumps of gold.

Henry arrives in New York, and on March 2nd, 1853, he is married to Miss Cornelia S. Hall, of Byron, New York. He returns to California, with his bride, to primitive quarters, where "real happiness was experienced."

### HIS MARRIAGE



## Library of Congress

They remain in California until their daughter is about a year old when Henry decides to again return to the eastern states. He finally becomes established in business in Buffalo, New York, but suffers from the panic of 1875, when he again turns his face toward southern Florida, where he goes, with his two sons, to try to settle the township

### FLORIDA AGAIN

of land, granted to his family by Congress. He was encouraged by the glowing accounts that he read of the beauty, healthfulness, and productive soil of the country. He reaches south Florida in October, 1876.

Among the changes since his residence at Indian Key, was a lighthouse on Alligator Reef, five miles distant. They saw evidences of a recent hurricane near Key West. Shortly before reaching the channel through the Reef, they saw a hammer-head shark (a rare species) glide over the rocky bottom. While at Key West Henry renews old acquaintances: Charles and Edward Howe, formerly of Indian Key, were living there, also, Col. Maloney, who had been a clerk in the Houseman store before the Indian massacre. Col. Maloney exhibits to him beautiful specimens of large masses of "snow-white finger coral, which had been procured from Carysfoot Reef."

Henry and sons are invited to visit Col. Maloney's home. The grounds were surrounded by a barrel stave fence; no grass but an abundance of calcareous rock. The "garden presented an untidy appearance." Growing there were many kinds of

### KEY WEST HOME, 1876

fruit trees: sugar apple, Sour-sop, sapadilla, guava, shaddock, alligator pear, pineapple, orange, lemon, lime, date-palm and banana. The hurricane had stripped nearly every tree of its fruit. There were two handsome tame deer on the place. The entire city had a shiftless appearance.

## Library of Congress

While trolling in the water, enroute to Indian Key, one day, they caught a scaleless fish which was only three inches in width; shole like "burnished silver", and 42 inches long.

Professor

### TRICHIURUS LEPTURUS

Charles Linden pronounced it to be the "silvery, hair-tailed or scabbard fish or the trichiurus lepturus."

While on a visit at Indian Key, Henry observes an epitaph. In front of the spot where once stood Capt. Houseman's house,

### OLD EPITAPH

lay a marble slab with these words inscribed thereon: HERE Lieth The Body of Captain Jacob Houseman Formerly of Staten Island, State of New York Proprietor of the Island

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Who Died By an Accident May 1st, 1841 Aged 41 years and eleven Months. To His Friends He Was Sincere, To His Enemies He Was Kind To All Men Faithful. This Monument Is Erected By His Most Disconsolate Though Affectionate Wife, Elizabeth Ann Houseman Sic transit gloria mundi.

Henry and his sons find the "Bleeding-Tooth" shells clinging to the rocks on the southern portion of the Key. They also find a few Sisal Hemp plants on the island, offsprings of the plants brought from Yucatan by Dr. Perrine.

While wandering over this memorable islands Henry discovers the cistern in which the sailor, Beiglett, and young Sturdy were concealed when the Indians fired the warehouse above them. A dwelling house was erected over it. Leaving there and passing Upper Matacumbe they saw a number of buildings washed off their foundations by the hurricane.

## Library of Congress

November 5th, 1876, — Off Caesar's Creek, An Opening Into Biscayne, Between the Upper End of Key Largo and Elliott's Key. "Set sail about three o'clock a.m. Nearing the opening between the Keys we pass a sponge corral in which sponges

### EXCERPT FROM LETTER

are placed after they are dead, to be washed clean by the ebb and flow of the tide. Now we are fairly upon 22 the magnificent Biscayne Bay. Slowly nearing the long looked-for landing place. We can just catch a glimpse of the roof of Addison's house through the tress. Anchor is dropped nearly half a mile from shore and a sail boat is on the way to us..

"Mr. Addison, who has lived here for the past fifteen years, met us cordially. His house consists of a very ordinary log kitchen, about 15 feet square, with a verandah on the north side of it and a rough board building about the same size, containing one room, about ten feet in front between the kitchen and the bay. His wife is tall, thin, with a kindly face, showing evidence of culture and refinement."

Henry remarks upon the balmy Florida air and luxuriant, semi-tropical growth, but is disheartened to find rock near the surface of the soil everywhere, and scrub palmetto in every direction, leaving no "place for a plow." He is encouraged, however, by the discovery of a road out through a part of the hammock, at the end of which was an open space of about two acres, which had been cleared (he learned) by the expenditure of a vast amount of toil, and which showed a dark and apparently rich loam. The lime trees were in bloom, but some of them had been injured by the hurricane. Morning-glory vines were prolific. They came upon a large banana field, and upon growing sweet potatoes. An exploration through the hammock brought them to the open pines facing the bay. Between the woods and the bay lay a space of salt marsh, about 120 yards wide; the line of the shore making a curve inward from the point in front of the hammock. From the point in front of the hammock issue two streams of fresh water from among the 23 mangroves. At one of these, the spongers who frequent the bay, in search of sponges, often obtain

## Library of Congress

their supply of drinking water. At various places near “our first place of landing”, springs of fresh water well up through the salt water, so that “it is possible by placing an open cask in the sand, with the top above the surface of the bay, to obtain the best of all beverages, uncontaminated by the surrounding brine. This water comes through underground crevices in the rock from the Everglades.”

In their attempt to erect a tent they found it difficult to get holding ground for their wooden tent pins, owing to the [oolitic?] rock strewn everywhere.

Henry plants corn, which is destroyed by the “bud worm.” Peach pits prove a failure. He discovers a bear track (resembling a human foot) on his melon beds, and panther tracks

### FIRST CROP

on his citrus seed beds. Within a short period they had plenty of vegetables, but potatoes had been attacked by ants.

During three or four months of the year, Henry found that they could reach; “dry-shod”, through the beautiful prairie back of Addison's house, a sink hole filled with clear water,

### FISH ABUNDANT

“margined with lily pads” and teeming with fish of different variety; numerous bream, black bass (called trout) which were easily caught. And near Henry's garden spot, in the edge of the dense hammocks were deep rock holes in which “swarmed” bullheads and bream, and “many more black bass inhabited a larger depression beyond.”

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Over the smooth surface of the bay they see quantities of bubbles, after which they watch Mr. Addison cast his net and catch, with “one throw”, fifty fine mullets (an excellent pan fish) and “probably the most abundant of any kind in these waters.” The mullet's dreaded enemy, the barracouta, seems constantly lying in wait for it. On one occasion, “so great

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was the number and so great the attacks of their enemies, that the sound caused by their leaping was like the rush of waves upon the beach, and its appearance was similar to a crest of an incoming wave.”

The barracouta is a beautiful fish, having a long and nearly round body, a long, sharp-pointed head and sharp teeth, which enables it to cut through an ordinary seine and also to cut a heavy fish line when attached directly to the hook. They lie apparently motionless near the bottom, but almost instantaneously dart away like an arrow from a bow when disturbed. The flesh is white and is excellent food.

They practiced catching large fish at night; two men would go in a boat at the beginning of high tide; one would stand in the bow with a long pole, the end of which was inserted in the socket of a fish spear, called the grains. To

### NIGHT FISHING

this spear is attached a long, stout line having the other end fastened to the boat. Just behind the man in the bow is a short pole, placed in the mast hole, on the upper and of which is an arm extending beyond the side of the boat and upon which an iron grating rests, filled with bits of burning pitchpine. The light from the fire attracts the attention 25 of the fish, as the boat is slowly pushed by the aid of the pole, by the man in the stern, and while the fish are gazing at the blaze they are more easily captured than by daylight.

“Although we were in a region below 26 degrees N. latitude, there were heavy frosts. The thermometer showed 33 degrees. The suffering from cold was keen. Hundreds of fish

### FROST IN NOVEMBER

were killed in the bay.” The banana plants were damaged. The beneficial results were relief from mosquitoes and the destruction of the morning-glory vines.

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In late November they bought venison from Jumping Johnny and Cypress Tom, who came from the north trail. The Indians' appearances were villainous; each wore a plaid, woolen

### INDIAN TRADERS

shawl, turban effect, around his head. One wore no trousers, only a long shirt. They carried powder horns, shot and other pouches. Knives suspended from their waists and shoulders. Jumping Johnny had been banished from Dade County for stealing. Old Tigertail, and others, paid to keep him out of prison. These Indians pretended to understand but little English.

Henry's young son, Harry, in company with "Will Rogers", mistake the puffing sound of the porpoise, and the barking, or hoarse cry of a crane, for bear cubs.

A fresh breeze in January washes ashore thousands of Portugese Men-of-War, also a large number of small blue nautilus shells. "It is probable that the ancients procured from these shells the celebrated Tyrian purple; for the occupant of the shell secretes a liquid of a deep purple color. After 26 such a breeze there was nearly always found a few sea beans upon the beach. These so-called beans are not a product of the sea. They are said to be growing on some of the West India islands and are washed down by mountain torrents to the sea, and then by the force of the winds and ocean currents finally reach the Florida Keys and the beach of the mainland as far north as Georgia. The bean is nearly round, about three-fourth of an inch in diameter and three-eighth of an inch thick. The sides have a rough surface varying in color from a light to a very dark brown, the rim being smooth and nearly black. The shell is very hard and is susceptible to a high polish. These are often fitted with a gold band and sold for watch charms..

Henry goes to Soldiers' Key, a small island directly opposite his place, to secure crawfish and [conchs?] for bait, and to find micramock shells. South of Soldiers' Key are three small islands called Ragged Keys, - one about

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### SOLDIERS' KEY

a mile long, named Sander's Key, which is separated from Elliott's Key by a space of about fifty yards, termed Sander's Cut, through which the tide swiftly passes at its ebb or flow. Each side of the cut is densely lined with mangrove bushes.

Sighting the smoke of a steamer at Cape Florida, they visit the Cape, and find the steamer to be the government Lighthouse Inspecting and Supply Boat. While at Cape

### CAPE FLORIDA

Florida they caught a large snapper and a heavy striped sheepshead. A guide takes the party up to the lantern in the lighthouse and upon the narrow balcony surrounding it. He tells them that a great number of birds are killed at night by flying against the thick glass surrounding the light. Mr. Frow was the lighthouse keeper.

They are towed to Henry's place, the "Hunting Grounds". Enroute, they reach Bahia Honda channel (called there, Bay of Hundy) said to be a treacherous place in the event of storms.

Henry Discovers an Indian mound a short distance back in the hammock, near his place. The mound consisted of a pile of the rough [oolitio?] rocks and soil, about ten or fifteen

### INDIAN MOUND

feet in diameter and about four feet in height. A gumbo limbo tree, two and one-half feet in diameter, was growing upon the top. Pick and spade were utilized, uncovering skulls and bones of both children and adults, buried with their faces downward and with the tops toward the center of the mound. Henry secures two good specimens of skulls; intending to present them to the academy of Natural Science, in Buffalo, but forgot to pack them when leaving.

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Coming through a banana field they see and kill a seven foot rattlesnake, almost “as large around as a boa constrictor.” They cut off ten rattles. The snake was stretched

### RATTLESNAKE UNRESISTING

his full length and “lazily lifted his head” when they came toward him but offered no resistance.

The only market at Key West was uncertain as all produce was sold at auction upon arrival, and good and bad prices 28 played at see-saw. Henry realizes that it would require many

### PRODUCE AUCTIONED

years there of “semi-savage life” ere he could hope to profit from his labors. This, together with the fact that he could obtain no cooperation from others in supplying the necessary means for developing the property, precipitated his decision to return to the northeastern states, and finally to Palmyra, Now York.

They boarded the sloop yacht belonging to Mr. Brickel, of “Maama”; spent the night on Indian Key; saw a watermelon patch on the island of Vitae Key, where, “in the

### HOMEWARD

end of every one was a small hole, perhaps an inch and a half in diameter and the interior of each had been cleanly scooped out by raccoons.” During this trip they also saw a curious denizen of the sea: the sea-pigeon. So called on account of its resemblance, both in color and shape, to a wild pigeon with outspread wings, as it floated upon or near the surface of the water.

Henry Perrine was compelled to share his stateroom with a young man, of nice appearance, but who drank constantly from a “flask of liquor” and finally, becoming insane,



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suddenly died (probably from fright, as the captain had threatened to throw him overboard) and was buried, with proper service, at sea. Before passing on, he became sane again and gave his grandfather's address (in New York) to Henry Perrine, who notified the grandparent of the tragedy.

Upon hearing of the death of his mother, Henry Perrine remarks: "Her children knew of her sterling worth, 29 her untiring industry and struggles to give us a fair education. \* \* \* She earnestly desired our spiritual as well as

### TRIBUTE TO HIS MOTHER

our temporal well-being, and it was the thought of her, and of my sister - far away, which made me firm in my endeavor to do right when I was a young man upon the distant Pacific Coast."

\* \* \* \*

Extract made by

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